accidents. These measures include timely replacement of over aged assets, adoption of suitable technologies for upgradation and maintenance of track, rolling stock, signaling and interlocking systems, safety drives and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices. As a result the number of consequential train accidents have come down from 473 in 2000-2001 to 415 in 2001-2002, 351 in 2002-2003, 325 in 2003-2004, and further to 234, averaging to 4.5 accidents per week in 2004-2005.

Increase in speed of trains

1319. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have set a minimum bench mark of 55 km/hour for around 200 superfast trains today which are earning extra revenue through supplementary surcharge on fare;

(b) whether most of these superfast trains run on sectors served by Rajdhani/Shatabdi the tracks for which have been upgraded for speeds beyond 100 km/hour; and

(c) whether Government would consider increasing the speed of these superfast trains to a minimum benchmark of 80 km per hour on such upgraded segments and thereby justify the extra surcharge levied and also to ensure efficient deployment of rakes on return journeys?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) As per the criteria fixed by railways, trains the average commercial speed of which, on the entire run in both directions, is minimum 55 Kmph on Broad Gauge & 45 Kmph on the Metre Gauge are designated as superfast irrespective of the type of tracks used, and a nominal surcharge is levied for travel by these trains.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration at present.

Disability Act, 1995

1320. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether disabled employees of Northern Railway held a candle light march recently in New Delhi demanding implementation of the Disability Act, 1995 in the Railways;

(b) if so, the reasons for not implementing the Act; and

(c) the steps being taken to rectify the situation and meet their other demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 is being implemented on the Railways within the limits of economic capacity and development.

(c) The demands of Northern Railway Physically Handicapped employees are under active consideration of the Ministry of Railways.

Automatic upgrade facility system for waitlisted passengers

1321. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railways are considering to introduce an automatic upgrade facility system for the wait listed passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that if implemented in all the trains the above system, the Railways are expected to earn huge revenue from it; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) With a view to optimise the utilisation of available accommodation in train, a scheme to upgrade full fare paying passengers to the next higher class against the available vacant accommodation has since been extended to all Mail/Express trains having sleeping accommodation w.e.f. 24-02-2006. The salient features of the scheme are given below:—

(i) The scheme is applicable to only full fare paying passengers, free of charge.

(ii) It is applicable only in those trains having sleeping accommodation.

(iii) The passengers for upgradation will be selected on random basis by the System at the time of preparation of reservation charts.